Pioneering in the Wisconsin lead region /

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PIONEERING IN THE WISCONSIN LEAD REGION. BY THEODORE RODOLF.1

1 Theodore Rodolf was born in the Canton of Aargau, Switzerland, October 17, 1815; he died at La Crosse, Wis., February 12, 1892. Mr. Rodolf was a graduate of the college of Aàràn, and was for a time a student at the University of Zurich. As stated in his narrative, he came to America when seventeen years of age, and settled in La Fayette County, Wis. In 1853 he was appointed receiver of the land office in La Crosse. He was a presidential elector in 1864; a member of the state assembly in 1868 and 1870, and during the same period was mayor of La Crosse. Mr. Rodolf's reminiscences were written in 1889 at the instance of the present Editor, who consented to their first publication as a serial, in the La Crosse *Chronicle* in May and June of that year.— Ed.

On the first day of April, 1884, I took passage at St. Louis on a neat little steamer, the name of which I cannot recollect, but which was a regular upper Mississippi packet whose destination was Galena, the commercial metropolis of the northwestern lead mines, which were rapidly growing in extent and importance. My object in undertaking this voyage was to explore the yet comparatively new country in quest of a suitable home for my mother and her family. We had ascended the Mississippi from New Orleans to avoid the yellow fever; and passed the winter of 1833–34 at St. Louis, where we had formed pleasant acquaintances and friendships among the French settlers who at that time constituted the majority of the population. Among those, we were particularly well received by the family of John Pierre Bugnion Gratiot, to whom we brought strong letters of recommendation, and by Messrs. Pierre Chouteau, John P. Cabanne, Chenier, and others.

Gratiot's father, Charles, was born at Lausanne, on Lake Geneva, Switzerland. The family, French Huguenots, were 339 obliged to emigrate at the time of the revocation of the edict

of Nantes by Louis XIV., and settled in Switzerland, where many other French exiles found a refuge and security from religious persecution. When quite a young man, however, J. P. B. Graftot found his way to St. Louis, then a small French settlement, entered the service of the Northwestern Fur Company, married Miss Chouteau, and made St. Louis his permanent home, becoming wealthy.1

1 See E. B. Washburne's biographical sketch of Henry Gratiot, and incidentally of Charles, the founder of the house, and the other members of the family, in *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, x, pp. 235–260.— Ed.

Gratiot had a considerable interest in the lead mines. He possessed mines as well as smelting furnaces, and intended to move his family to Galena so soon as spring had fairly opened, and he persuaded us to go up with him and his family to the lead mines, saying that the climate of St. Louis was exceedingly unhealthy in summer and that the Northwest Territory, in addition to health, would give us an opportunity to select a home more congenial to our ideas and habits than a residence in a slaveholding state. My father was opposed to going into the wilderness; but to us boys, visions of a life a la “Robinson Crusoe” danced before our imagination and we were delighted with the idea. My father had some business matters to settle in New Orleans, after which he promised to join us in our new home. He descended to New Orleans, but never came back. That summer he fell a victim to yellow fever, and was buried there.

My father's brother and only living near relative on his side, then quite a young man, having graduated at the University of Heidelberg, had concluded to join us in our emigration, and he and I were selected to make the voyage of exploration.

The boat on which we embarked was a clean and comfortable craft, a high-pressure steamer, whose puffing could be heard miles ahead. The cabin was plainly but substantially furnished, and kept very clean. There were no state rooms; but two tiers of bunks, containing the beds, 340 ran along the sides of the boat and were separated at

night from the saloon by curtains. The fare was substantial, plentiful, and good, and the officers were pleasant and gentlemanly; all the arrangements were more perfect than I had anticipated.

I had devoted most of my time during the winter to the study of the English language, so that I was able to carry on a conversation with our fellow passengers. Besides, there were several gentlemen from Galena on board—merchants and business men returning home after having passed the winter at St. Louis—Swiss and Germans with whom I could converse in French or German, and from whom I gathered valuable and interesting information about the. Celebrated lead mines of Illinois and Wisconsin. Our progress was rather slow. There being no opposition lines or competition, the boats did not care to overtax their capacity of speed; besides, they stopped at every landing place on the river, loading or unloading, or taking on wood, so that a journey of eight days from St. Louis to Galena was considered a very fair trip.

One morning we stopped at a place called Louisiana in Missouri, to take on wood. I do not know whether it was at the exact place where the present city of Louisiana now is, but it cannot be far from it. About half a dozen log cabins, surrounded by rail fences, composed the place. An incident took place here, which has left a lasting impression on my mind, it being so entirely novel to me, and the first characteristic trait of frontier life that had yet come to my personal knowledge. There came on board a gaunt, tall man who addressed the gentlemen in the cabin. saying that he and his family had come out here with the intention of making a permanent home; that they were, however, all taken sick with fever and ague; that they were anxious to return to their Eastern home, being convinced that they could not live here. They had, however, no means to go back. but that he owned a lot with a cabin on it, with some improvements, and that he wished to sell the same to raise money enough to enable him to go East. 341 He proposed to raffle his property at $5 a ticket. He would place in a hat twenty-five tickets, numbered from 1 to 25, one of the tickets marked “prize;” and to whoever drew the prize he would deed the place. The deed, already executed in blank, he had with him. Every passenger that felt himself able

took a ticket, and the settler thus placed about twenty of them. Five were not taken, but the passengers allowed these five tickets to remain in the hat as belonging to the settler. I, as the youngest passenger on board, was selected to draw the tickets out of the hat. I drew as many tickets as were sold, but the prize was not drawn, it being among the five unsold tickets voted to the settler. So he got his pay for the tickets sold, and won his place back again. I believe everybody was well pleased with the result. Nobody desired the man's home; all that we desired was to help the poor man to raise the means to return to his Eastern home. Whether after this he got better and decided to stay in Louisiana, or whether he actually left the country. I never knew, but it showed the kind heart and the generosity of the Western people which fifty years ago were more common traits than at the present time.

After passing Keokuk, then a very small settlement, and nearing Rock Island, we found the shores lined with large numbers of Indians. These were the remnants of the Sacs and Foxes who, under the lead of Black Hawk, had lately waged war against the settlers, and, having been defeated at the battle of Bad Axe, had returned to their homes, previous to their removal west of the Mississippi. They were peaceable, and caused no more trouble afterwards. They were the first Indians I had yet seen living in their own settlement. During our stay in St. Louis very few had visited the city, but the effect of their intercourse with the paie faces was already visible in their behavior, by adopting some of the lowest vices of their new acquaintances and losing that loftiness of character with which Fenimore Cooper has endowed his savage heroes. These followers of Black Hawk showed, as yet, no effect of contamination; 342 they impressed me as being, physically, a superior race, and their stoicism and imperturbability were astonishing. We visited Fort Armstrong, on the island, and then continued our trip up stream.

It is useless for me to describe the magnificent scenery that presented itself to our view all along the river. It was more picturesque and charming than at the present day, because it was still in its natural glory. The villages and embryo cities were small, often simple landing places, giving, however, indications of the future growth and improvements which have

made the states of Illinois and Iowa the great and prosperous commonwealths we find them to-day.

On the morning of the 8th of April, 1834, we entered Fever River, a small stream which empties into the Mississippi from the east, steamed up that river about six miles, and landed safely at Galena, which was at that time the most important city of the northwest. The day was clear and bright, and Galena, built as it was upon the side of a hill, the streets forming terraces one above the other, presented a most picturesque view, far superior to anything I had expected to find in a country which but a few years before was almost unknown to civilization and had but recently emerged from the horrors of a cruel Indian war. It was a most pleasant surprise. The country around Galena for a distance of forty or fifty miles east and north was dotted with crude log furnaces for smelting the mineral, the products of all of which had to be hauled by teams to this port for shipment down to St. Louis, from which place it found its way all over the country. This industry gave employment to a large number of people. The principal shippers at the time of my arrival were William Hempstead, Messrs. Henry and Nathan Corwith, Campbell & Smith, Moorehouse, and many others. There were several stores in the town, with well assorted stocks of goods, suitable to supply the wants and necessities of the settlers and miners throughout the country, and the volume of business transactions was surprising.

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We delivered our letters to the friends of Mr. Gratiot, and after resting a few days started on our exploring expedition under the lead of James G. Soulard, the acquaintance of whose mother we had made at St. Louis, and a Mr. Goss, the business agent of Mr. Gratiot. We left Galena on a bright morning on horseback to visit Col. Henry Gratiot, a brother of J. P. B. Gratiot, at Gratiot's Grove, which lies about twenty miles northeast of Galena, within the lines of Wisconsin. The road led through a very fine country, alternately prairie and hill, crossing Fever River, which we had to ford. The Fever is a large creek rather than a river, and is not navigable above Galena, and there only during high water in the Mississippi, which causes the slack water to overflow all low lands. During low water

it was a most arduous and slow undertaking to bring boats up to the city, and often quite impossible.

An old Canadian voyageur informed me that the name of the stream was “Rivière aux Fèves,” or “Bean river,” owing to the large amount of wild beans growing along its banks, from which it was corrupted to Fever River. This name is calculated to do injury to the climate of the country, for I never heard that fevers were prevalent along the stream, and Galena has always been considered a healthy place.

We passed through Council Hill, Benton, New Diggings, and other small settlements. On every side we saw scores of men digging and prospecting for mineral, and windlasses in operation. Towards evening we reached Gratiot's Grove, and were hospitably received and entertained by Mrs. Grafter in the absence of her husband, the colonel.

Gratiot's Grove presented even at this early season a most charming prospect; as it appeared a month later, I have never seen it surpassed in Wisconsin. Before us lay a rolling prairie, bounded on the north by the Blue Mound about thirty miles distant, and extending east to the Peckatonica River, whose course could be traced faintly by wooded hills; the prairie was bounded on the south and west by a magnificent grove of oaks, the destruction of which had been, however, already begun, as the voracious smelting 344 furnaces mercilessly claimed the sacrifice of the splendid trees which were the pride and glory of the “Grove.”

From this first visit dated our close friendship with the family of Henry Gratiot. Mrs. Gratiot was a sister of William Hempstead, commission merchant, and Charles Hempstead, a distinguished lawyer of Galena. She was a lady of cultivated mind and great firmness; endowed with the kindest of feelings, benevolent, and a devoted wife and mother. A youthful friendship sprang up between the children at home with their mother and myself. I particularly remember Susan, afterwards Mrs. Kimball; Adèle, afterwards the wife of E. B. Washburne, who with such signal success later filled the difficult position of minister

to France during the Franco-Prussian war. Many pleasant hours we spent together, and although after the death of Colonel and Mrs. Gratiot we have not often met, yet the recollection of those early days lingers as one of the green spots in my memory. The last time I saw Mrs. Washburne was at the funeral of Gov. Cadwallader C. Washburne. Since then she and her husband have both gone to their last home, like many others of the pioneers.

The next morning we visited the settlement of the “Grove,” the stores, warehouse, and smelting works. The latter were of the most primitive character, and a very large percentage of the lead was lost in the operation. I also visited the school, where to my surprise I found a small class of country boys studying Latin and Greek, besides the common branches taught in the primary schools. None of the boys could have been over fifteen or sixteen years of age. The schoolmaster, I think his name was Cubbage, made them read and parse for my benefit in Cicero's Orations and Homer's Iliad.

We were informed that Henry Gratiot was in the woods on the Peckatonica River, getting out timber to be floated down the river to Wolf's Creek and then up that stream to a place afterwards known as Gratiot, for the purpose of building a flour mill, the first in that section of the country. So we resumed our journey and followed a track 345 made by “sucker” teams hauling lead from Hamilton's settlement, the smelting works of William S. Hamilton, to Galena, a distance of some forty miles. During the summer months, when the prairies were covered with their luxuriant carpets of green, people from the adjoining state of Illinois would come up into the mines, with their ox-teams of five or six or more yokes of oxen, to do all the heavy teaming, hauling the lead from the furnaces to Galena, a distance of forty or fifty miles, camping out nights, and sleeping in their wagons. They brought their own provisions with them, and the prairies furnished feed for their cattle. The more frugal and hard-working men saved all the money they could. But as soon as the first frost killed the grass in the fall, they started for their home, to reappear in the spring. The people

called them “suckers” because they appeared in the spring and disappeared in the fall like the sucker fish.

From Gratiot's Grove until we reached the Peckatonica, a distance of about twenty miles, we did not meet a human being. It was too early yet for “sucker” teams,1 nor did we pass any settlement, house, field, or tree. What astonished us most was the utter absence of game. With the exception of a plover or a curlew, and an occasional prairie chicken, the prairie appeared as devoid of living beings as the desert of Sahara. In a few weeks later, when spring had fairly set in, a most wonderful change was manifest. The vast prairie, as far as the eye could reach, was clothed with a carpet of the richest green, interspersed with gorgeous wild flowers of brilliant hues of red, blue, and yellow, in fact of every color of the rainbow—reminding one of the garden of Eden, as our youthful fancies never fail to paint it for us. I could not then realize that in a few months the ice king would ruthlessly destroy and bury under a depth of three or four feet of snow all that glory and magnificence. Towards sundown we reached the Peckatonica, a handsome stream of clear water winding its slow and very

1 Meaning teams from Illinois.— Ed.

 crooked course around hills and through open prairie, in a southeasterly direction, to its junction with the Rock.

Here we struck the first settlement we had seen or reached that day. A squatter named Hastings had built himself a log cabin and outhouses, and lived there with his family, keeping a sort of tavern. The village of Riverside is now built where this lonely cabin stood fifty-five years ago. We enquired of Hastings where we could find Gratiot, and he informed us that he was across the river in the timber. We rode on about one and a half or two miles till we struck the fording place. Crossing the river, which in the spring was very high, we for some distance had to swim our horses. We crossed in safety, and this being my first adventure of that nature I greatly enjoyed the novelty. We then rode along the bottom and

soon heard the sound of the woodchoppers' axes, and guided by them found the camp, shortly after sundown, and were most cordially received by Colonel Gratiot.

There was no flour mill within forty or fifty miles, and Gratiot and Curtis concluded to build one about six miles from this camp upon Wolf Creek, where an excellent waterpower was available. The timber cut in the bottom was first floated down the Peckatonica to the mouth of Wolf Creek, then towed up that stream to this place, which afterward grew into a village called Gratiot, and which for more than thirty years was the residence of my oldest brother Frederick.

We were thoroughly tired, hungry, and wet after crossing the river. Not having had a mouthful to eat since morning, the men hurried up supper for us. Sitting before a large fire outside of the tent, we soon succeeded in drying ourselves, and were prepared to do ample justice to our meal, which consisted principally of roasted potatoes, cornbread, and catfish caught in the Peckatonica.

After eating, we crept into our tent and had a delightful rest till morning, which broke clear and pleasant, although I thought I heard distant thunder. I was greatly astonished as I could see no clouds or any indication of a storm. 347 I was informed the thunder I heard was the drumming made by the cock pheasant, to call around him his female companions.

After breakfast we started to visit William S. Hamilton1 at Fort Hamilton or Hamilton's Diggings, now called Wiota, Henry Gratiot accompanying us. Passing through some fine timber lands, and then over more rolling prairies, we reached Fort Hamilton by a circuitous route, towards evening, and found Hamilton at home. Although I did not expect to find a solid, strong, imposing structure, such as I had seen on the Rhine, nor a residence such as a colonel commanding a fort might be expected to occupy, yet I confess I had all romance taken out of me when I found the fort consisted of two small log cabins, connected with each other by an open area, covered by clapboards.

1 See *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, xii, p. 270, for sketch of Col. William Stephen Hamilton.— Ed.

The temporary defenses which had been erected during the Black Hawk War, a short time previous, had been removed, and nothing remained that would particularly remind one of scenes of blood and murder. The doors had no bolts or locks but simply a latch-string hanging out; the single opening in each cabin, intended for a window, had, if I remember rightly, no glass. The furniture corresponded with the building: a rude bedstead with some blankets and buffalo robes for bedding, an oaken table, some wooden stools, and a few shelves filled with books, among which a fine quarto edition of the works of Voltaire, printed in Paris, attracted my particular attention. The colonel had been a French scholar, but his long residence in the Far West, and his settlement at this place since 1828, together with his busy life as a smelter, left him no time to cultivate literary tastes; yet he was still able to carry on a conversation in French on ordinary topics with me. I had picked up sufficient English to help out when we both were embarrassed. I forgot to mention that Henry Gratiot and James G. Soulard both spoke the French language 348 perfectly well, that having been the native language of their parents.

Hamilton's Diggings presented not nearly as handsome or pleasing a prospect as Gratiot's Grove. The hills were nearly bare of trees, having been cut down to feed the furnaces; and although the mound at Belmont, the Platte Mound, and the Blue Mound formed the frame of the panorama, yet the view was not so extended and charming as from Gratiot's. It is true there were more settlements and cultivated fields in view, but the prairie was cut up by numerous mineral holes, piles of dirt, and windlasses, which marred the beauty of the landscape, but showed great activity and industry.

It is to this fort that the settlers and miners fled for protection during the Black Hawk War. It is from here that Henry Dodge started with his little band of volunteers to fight the battle of Peckatonica on the 16th day of June, 1832, in which every one of the savages was killed

in a hand-to-hand fight. The settlers lost three killed and one wounded. With many of the survivors I was intimately acquainted.

At the time of my visit, the blockhouse and defence created two years before had disappeared; only the dwelling part remained, being neither better nor worse than any other log cabin. No traveler would have suspected that any military camp or fort had, such a short time before, occupied the place. All the romance or pomp of war had vanished as by enchantment, and the mineral holes, the windlasses, log furnaces, and ox teams reminded us that the only war now carried on was one of work—labor and industry against nature—for the purpose of raising the hidden treasure of mother earth.

The next few days, having been joined by Hamilton, we extended our explorations in all directions, hunting for a place suitable to make a settlement. About four or five miles southwest of Fort Hamilton, an old man named Lot, and his son Haman, had settled on the bank of the Peckatonica River some years ago, before the land had been surveyed 349 by the United States. He was a regular squatter, a typical backwoodsman. He had broken and fenced in a few acres of land, built a log house for himself and another one for his son, also the necessary log stables, cribs, and a good spring house. He owned a span of horses, and a dozen or more of cows and other cattle, hogs and chickens—in fact everything necessary to start a farm, but he did not seem to be very industrious nor fond of work. He devoted more time to trapping and hunting than to farming, and so did his son. His nearest neighbors north were Hamilton's settlement about five miles distant; on the east, not a vestige of a habitation could be seen or was known for miles. On the west, the nearest settler was Hastings, across the river some five miles; but on the south, a few miles away, J. R. Schultz, a Pennsylvania German, had lately made his home, with his wife and children,1 and a mile or so farther Stephen Armstrong and his wife had located. The old man Lot felt that he was getting crowded, and therefore desired to move farther west, where he would have more room for his pursuits. He was well known to Gratiot and to Hamilton, and to his place we went with a view of buying his claim, if it suited and we could agree. We left the whole matter to our friends, neither my uncle nor I feeling

competent to express any opinion. The result was that we bought the place with all his stock of horses, cattle, hogs, and implements for my mother. I do not remember what the consideration was, but I was satisfied with the bargain, the location being quite pleasing.

1 The *History of La Fayette County* (Chicago: Western Historical Co., 1881), p. 592: “In 1833, J. R. Schultz and Peter Corish settled in the town [Gratiot]. Of Mr. Schultz it is related that he was an honorable and generous-hearted but fire-eating Kentuckian, who taught his children to fight on the slightest insult against their honor, or expect a sound drubbing from him if they did not. He was a highly respected citizen, and lived here many years.”— Ed.

The houses were built upon a hill and stood in the midst of several acres of cultivated land. To the east was a river-bottom field of about the same size. In front the Peckatonica 350 flowed past, forming a large and picturesque band bordered by a row of willows into which a good-sized creek emptied its clear and transparent waters, up which the trout could be seen swimming. On the northwest a fine grove of oaks and elms completed the picture.

Of course Lot could give no title to the land, as he had none; it was not yet in market. But it had just been surveyed by the United States surveyors, and it appeared that he had settled on the corner of four quarter sections, so that when the land came to be offered for sale we had the chance of selecting whatever portion we desired. Of course I had not the slightest knowledge of the United States laws regulating the entries and sale of public lands, but trusted implicitly to our friends that all was right; and relied on the promise of Lot that he would prove up his claim when the proper time came, and that he would remain on the place until my mother and family came up from St. Louis to take possession. After all things had been properly and satisfactorily arranged, Colonel Hamilton left for his home, and we started on our return journey to Gratiot's Grove.

Hamilton was a man of culture, active, and enterprising. Although he had lived for many years among the roughest and hardest class of men, the miners and adventurers of early

days, he retained and exhibited, when he so desired, the polish of his early training. In stature he was of medium height, stout, well built, and of robust health, able to bear the hardships of frontier life. During the Black Hawk War he had exhibited great courage and rendered valuable services. He was the youngest son of Alexander Hamilton, the father of Federalism, and had imbibed his father's political principles. Socially he was pleasant, but not communicative, and left the impression of a rather cold and distant man. He emigrated to California after the discovery of the gold mines and there died.

We spent another pleasant day with Henry Grafter and his family, at the Grove. Gratiot had abandoned the business of smelting and mining, to devote his time to farming 351 and land transfers; besides, his official duties as Indian agent required a good deal of his time. He was a man of fine appearance and carriage, gifted with rare suavity of manners, which won the confidence and respect of all with whom he came in contact. His probity was proverbial. His open, straightforward dealing with the Indians had won him the friendship of all the tribes then inhabiting the lead mine region. Several times the chiefs had saved his life, even from the Sacs and Foxes, and he was enabled to use his influence for the benefit and protection of the settlers.

There was a marked contrast between him and Hamilton. The latter was a keen, shrewd business man, mostly devoted to money-making; rather unsuccessful in this, but developing all the smartness of a real Yankee in trade. Gratiot, on the other hand, was open-hearted, frank, almost indifferent to gain, devoted to his family, looking upon the acquisition of riches not as the prime object of life, but simply as the means to successfully carry out his undertakings, to provide for his family, and to assist friends and neighbors. One showed the characteristics of English ancestry, while in the other could easily be traced the distinguishing traits of the French.

The death of Gratiot, which occurred two years after my first acquaintance with him, while on his return from a visit to his brother, Gen. Charles Gratiot, Jr., at Washington, was a great loss to this section of the country and he was universally regretted and mourned.

On our return to Galena, we found that my mother's family had arrived from St. Louis and were the guests of Mrs. Adèle Gratiot,1 who had also come up with her family, and occupied a very pleasant and convenient residence, which her husband had built for her. We acquainted them with our purchase, and it was decided that we should move upon our land as soon as possible. Meanwhile, the weather had changed, and snow and rain fell, as usual in April, and

1 See “Mrs. Adèle P. Gratiot's Narrative,” in *Wis. Hist. Colls*., x, pp. 261–275. She was the wife of John P. B. Gratiot.— Ed.

352 the streets in Galena were turned into regular sloughs, becoming almost impassable. The soil being pure clay, the mud was knee deep, and whoever was obliged to cross the streets had to tuck his trousers into his bootlegs. Our time was mostly occupied in unloading our household goods, which had been brought up from St. Louis, and were stored in the loft of a warehouse.

In all my travels through the mines I had not met a single German or German-speaking miner or settler. In the city, however, there were a number of German or Swiss gentlemen doing business, with whom I afterwards got acquainted. Of these I remember Messrs. Schirmer, Bininger, Chetlain, Rindisbacher, Smith, and others, all in comfortable circumstances; but I found none among the laboring people, except one man who was helping to store our goods.

Toward the end of April or the beginning of May, we had finally settled upon our claim.1 My mother and sisters occupied one of the cabins for their room, and we boys slept in the larger one, which served also as our living room and kitchen, wherein the family always gathered. The weather had cleared up, and on the fourth of May the sun rose in all its glory and gave us a real summer day. One of our neighbors came and told us that it was time to attend to our fields, and offered to show us how to plant corn. My older brother, who was of a practical turn of mind, and my younger brothers who thought it fun to work in a field, at once entered upon their new occupation. But I, being of a rather delicate

constitution, felt totally unfit to do any manual labor. I had spent my whole life in schools and colleges, and had entered the university of Zurich, which was instituted about six months before our emigration.

1 *History of La Fayette Co*., p. 592, says: “In 1834, a Swiss family by the name of Rodolf, the male members of which were H. L. and J. C. F., settled in the town [Gratiot]. * * * The Rodolfs were a high-bred and well-educated family. H.L. Rodolf, uncle of J. C. F., was a polished gentleman, and had been President of the Swiss Republic previous to emigrating to this country.”— Ed.

353 Outside of my books and studies, I was the most ignorant fellow imaginable, and of practical agriculture I had not the slightest idea, never having had an axe, a hoe, or any other implement of the kind in my hands. Of course, I supposed I could soon learn all that would be necessary to make a farmer of me, and made up my mind to do so. But I broke down. My constitution would not permit me to labor in the field, and I was assigned to some of the lighter duties, the principal one of which was to supply the family with game, as that was the only chance we had of getting fresh meat. That occupation was particularly well suited to my taste.

The country was full of game; prairie chickens, partridges, quails, ducks, geese, and deer were abundant. One evening while hunting somewhere below where the village of Darlington, La Fayette County, is now situated, I counted more than fifty deer in a herd, but I could not get within shooting distance. Later in the season, when our cabbages in the garden were nearly full grown, they were almost all eaten up one night by a lot of deer which had jumped the fence, within a hundred feet of our dwelling, and regaled themselves at our expense. This was repeated several times.

Still more annoying were the wolves. Every clear summer evening, after sundown, we could hear their whoo-oo-o-oo, in the distance, which would be answered from another direction, and again from another, until the whole horizon seemed to be alive with their howls. Our dogs would answer them, but after we had retired the wolves would venture

even on our stoop, and our cowardly dogs, of which we had two, would not dare to attack them, but forsook their post and hid themselves under the house. When the wolves heard us getting up, they would instantly retreat, and I never could get a shot at them. Our neighbor, J. R. Schultz, was awakened early one morning by their howling, and the invasion of his stoop. Jumping out of bed and seizing his rifle, he cautiously opened the door, intending to kill the intruders; but to his surprise he found 24 354 a splendid buck that had jumped over the railing in seeking protection from a large wolf, which was glaring at his intended victim from outside, being unable to climb the fence. Schultz immediately shot the deer, and let the wolf escape.

Another annoyance was the great abundance of snakes, particularly rattlesnakes. I have never before or since, even in Florida or Louisiana, seen anything like it. When out hunting, I became so well acquainted with the sound of their rattle that I lost all fear of them. Whenever a rattler made his presence known to me, I would break off a pliable twig from a bush, and cautiously approach the reptile. As soon as I saw it coiled up, I would swiftly deal it a blow upon the head with my rod, following it up rapidly with a succession of other blows until the snake was killed. I never missed one, and I must have destroyed hundreds.

I became quite a successful hunter, and during the season our table was always liberally supplied with game, so that my contributions to the general stock were quite as valuable as what the labor of my brothers and uncle produced; for there was no meat market where our supplies could be got, nearer than Galena, which was forty miles distant, and fresh beef could not be transported that distance in summer. We could only get mess pork at $40 a barrel, and $4 for hauling; while game was more palatable, and could be got for the hunting.

Galena, whither we went not to exceed twice a month, was our only market. We were always made welcome at the house of J. P. B. Gratiot, brother of Henry Gratiot, with whose family my mother had ascended from St. Louis. Having now dissolved partnership

with his brother, the former had erected, I believe, the first Drummond smelting furnace at Galena, by which the enormous loss and waste of mineral which the old process entailed was very greatly reduced. He now lived at Galena, in a pleasant and comfortable residence, just completed. Sometimes Mrs. Adèle Gratiot, his wife, accompanied by some of her children, would come out to our farm, returning our visit, and spend 355 a week or two with my mother and sisters. She was a lady of superior accomplishments. Born and educated at Paris, she had all the grace, polish of manner, and vivacity of a French lady of distinction; and her kindness and amiability could never be affected by any circumstance, however trying or unpleasant it might be. She was always self-possessed, calm, and dignified, without stiffness, and entirely free from bigotry. Wherever known, she was admired for her superior qualities of head and heart. Her father, René Alphonse de David de Perdreauville, had been governor of the island of Gaudeloupe under Napoleon; after the emperor fell, he came to the United States in 1815. In 1818 he settled at St. Louis.1 The following year, his daughter Adèle, then seventeen years of age, was married to J. P. Bugnion Gratiot. She never missed an occasion to manifest her friendship and her interest in our condition, she herself having experienced the hardships of pioneer life on a farm near St. Louis, with her father, prior to her marriage. Her husband was a man of distinguished appearance—straight, tall, of symmetrical build, bright, active and enterprising, and universally popular; he held no public office, preferring the life of a private gentleman. Our intimacy continued as long as the family lived at Galena. After their removal to the mines of Missouri, we gradually lost sight of each other.

1 See *Wis. Hist. Colls*., x, pp. 261, 262.— Ed.

Besides hunting and studying, I found, unsolicited, a new occupation. Previous to leaving Switzerland, our family physician prepared for me a medicine chest, containing all the simple drugs and medicines which were most likely to be of value to us during our journey, together with directions in the nature of a dispensary. We found this a valuable contribution to our comfort. In some way this fact became known in our neighborhood and at Hamilton's settlement, and soon I had calls for help in case of sickness from near and

far. I gave of my supplies as long as they lasted, never taking a compensation therefor. I was soon known throughout 356 out the country as “Doctor Rodolf,” and so called by my friends in Galena and by all the older settlers. I was advised by my friends to set myself up as a physician. There was no law preventing my doing so, and I was assured of quite a fair practice, but I would not do it. I had but too recently arrived from Europe, and lacked the impudence necessary for a successful imposter.

Although the settlers were all simply squatters, belonging, with few exceptions, to the poorer classes of citizens, we never had the least difficulty or trouble with any of our neighbors; but found them willing and ready at all times to assist us with their counsel and advice. Whenever there was a corn husking, or quilting party, or barn raising, we were sure to receive an invitation, and a cordial reception, whenever we could accept the offer. We heard of no violation of law or other outrage, and although rumors reached us of lawlessness at Mineral Point, which became a great mining center, yet Wiota, Hamilton's settlement, and the Peckatonica country enjoyed peace and quiet. Occasionally, bands of thirty or fifty Winnebago Indians would pass our place on their way to see their agent, Col. Henry Gratiot. In view of the remembrance of the outrages so lately committed during the Black Hawk War, we at first felt some trepidation at their visits; but soon got used to their calls, and felt perfectly safe.

As for churches there were none; neither were the settlements overrun by itinerant preachers. I remember but one instance, in which services were held as the house of a neighbor, Ezra Lamb, about five miles distant, by I think, a Methodist minister.1 There may have been more, but I am not aware of it. People spent their summer Sundays walking in the woods or over their fields; and in the winter trying to keep warm in the chimney corner.

That fall the United States land office was established at Mineral Point; but the proclamation for a public sale did not

1 The *History of Iowa County* (Chicago: Western Historical Co., 1881), p. 761, says that a Methodist itinerant named Simpson was preaching in the neighborhood of Dodgeville as early as 1837.— Ed.

357 include our homestead. The lands situated south of the Wisconsin River and east of the fourth principal meridian were offered in September, 1835. Then I had to go to Mineral Point to enter our farm. I had never been there before. A neighbor of ours, Mr. Reed, who lived about ten miles lower down on the river, and who had his own land to enter, offered to call for me early the next morning, that we might travel in company. We started about sunrise, both on horseback. I had my money packed in my saddlebag. It was a beautiful September day. We followed the ridge road through the timber. The trees had already assumed the variegated hues, which a few light frosts had imparted to them; the wild plum trees and wild grapes lined our path on both sides as if they were set out in a regular park. I never enjoyed a more agreeable ride, until we came within a few miles of Mineral Point. Here the hills were stripped of their trees, and windlasses, mineral holes, piles of dirt, rocks, and mineral greeted our view on all sides. The distance we had travelled was from twenty-eight to thirty miles, and we arrived in time to find the land offices yet open for business, to which we at once repaired and made our business known.

Maj. John P. Sheldon, the register, to whom I brought letters of introduction from Colonels Hamilton and Gratiot, informed me that I would have to bring witnesses to prove up settlement and right to the land, and gave me till the 21st of September to make the proof. Of course I was ignorant of any land laws or regulations, or I could have been prepared to meet the demand; and my companion also knew nothing. So after letting our horses rest and taking our dinners, we concluded to return home at once. The money being all in silver, I did not consider Mineral Point a safe place to stop in. Besides the large number of miners, the public land sales brought hundreds of strangers to the place, and the accommodations were scarce and poor. It was nearly five o'clock in the afternoon when we started on our homeward journey.

Major Sheldon told me that we were entitled to several 358 floats. My mother, as a widow, my Uncle Henry, my older brother and myself, having reached eighteen years of age, could claim 160 acres. I did not at that time fully understand the meaning or the value of this privilege. By an act of congress, when two or more parties entitled to pre-emption rights settled upon the same quarter-section, one party might enter that quarter-section, and the others each were entitled to select a quarter-section anywhere else in the same land district which was liable to entry and not claimed by prior rights. These privileges were called “floats,” and were considered very valuable, as they could be located anywhere for mill sites or town plats, without the obligation of settling thereon or proving up.

When we had our proofs perfected and ready, I again, accompanied by my brother Frank, repaired to Mineral Point to make our entry. We stopped at the tavern of Mrs. John Hood,1 who kept a good house for those times. Every tavern was full to overflowing. Speculators and gamblers had congregated in crowds, and during the land sales Mineral Point was anything but a quiet and desirable place to live in. We sold two of our floats, one to Ebenezer Brigham, of Blue Mounds, who located a valuable tract of land near the mound, and for which we got $10. The other we sold to a speculator, whose name I have forgotten, also for $10, which, however, he never paid us. As I said, we had no idea of their value; but were told we could readily have got $50 for each, if we had known how to manage the matter, or had had a friend to consult with. But we were well satisfied, and when our business was finished we returned home proud and happy in the thought that we had now again a home of our own.

1 *History of Iowa Co*. (Chicago: Western Historical Co.,1881), pp. 656, 657, gives an account of the Hoods, who settled at Mineral Point in 1828. Hood, who was a miner, and served in the Black Hawk War as a lieutenant of volunteers, died in 1844.— Ed.

But we did not enjoy that home very long. Our experimental farming did not result in success. That fall the prairie fires were frequent and destructive, and we lost all 359 of our stacks of hay. Thus, in the beginning of a winter, whose severity we had before

experienced, we found ourselves without the means to properly care for our stock, having only saved that portion that was stored in our barn and sheds.

I was thoroughly disheartened and disgusted with farming, and was convinced that nature had never intended me for an agriculturist. I made up my mind that I must seek some other occupation better suited to my tastes and capabilities. I wrote to friends in St. Louis and New Orleans; and when spring finally came, I was ready for another exploring expedition. I went to Galena, and some time in April, 1836, descended the river to St. Louis and from there to New Orleans.

I was young and full of hope. My health had greatly improved. Constant exercise in the pure air, hunting, fishing, and horseback riding had made me comparatively strong. I had also improved in the English language, by study and reading, so I could make my way. All this time I had not heard one word of German spoken, and had become well acquainted With the customs and habits of Western people. Of politics I was yet ignorant. Not being of age I could not vote, so that I was not troubled by candidates.

The first allusion made to political parties, in our settlement, was in the fall of 1835, when William S. Hamilton announced himself as a candidate for the legislative council, which was called to meet at Green Bay on January 1, 1836. He called himself a Whig; but was not elected as a representative Whig, but solely on his own popularity, just as Gen. George W. Jones,1 who was an ardent Jacksonian Democrat, was elected by men of all political creeds as delegate to congress from Michigan Territory, of which, at that time, Wisconsin formed a part. Political parties had not as yet gained such power in the Northwest as to determine

1 For a biographical sketch of George Wallace Jones, see *Wis. Hist. Soc. Proc*. for 1896, p. 35.— Ed.

During my temporary absence important changes took place in Wisconsin, as well as in my mother's family. The territory was detached from Michigan and erected into the territory of Wisconsin, which embraced within its limits the present states. of Iowa and Minnesota. Henry Dodge, who had, as early as 1826, come to the lead mines, and was engaged in smelting some five miles from Mineral Point, was appointed by President Jackson governor of the new territory, and took the oath of office on the fourth of July, 1836, at Mineral Point, which became at once the chief city of the territory. My mother's family, all except my oldest brother Frederick and my uncle, abandoned the farm and moved to Mineral Point, where my sisters soon got married, and my brothers engaged in various occupations.

I resolved to return to Wisconsin. I bought a stock of groceries at New Orleans, shipped them up to St. Louis, thence to Galena, and had them hauled by team forty miles to Mineral Point; but the venture did not prove a success. The expenses were so great that there was no profit left; yet I was compelled to increase my stock to meet the wants of the country, and continued in the mercantile business till I was satisfied that the occupation of a merchant was either not suited to my taste, or I was not suited to the occupation. I sold out and opened a drug store, which was a pursuit more in accord with my earlier training, offering a field for some mental occupation and study. I now concluded to build my own store and dwelling.

During my absence in the south, the smelters, miners, and merchants of Mineral Point, Dodgeville, Lancaster, Platteville, and other villages throughout Iowa and Grant counties, became dissatisfied with the treatment they received at the hands of the commission merchants and business men of Galena, to which place they were compelled to cart the product of the mines and furnaces, for shipment down the river. They complained of extortionate charges, 361 and resolved to build a rival city or port somewhere on the Mississippi River, where their business could be transacted for them at less expense. They selected a location called Sinipee, a few miles below Potosi, on the Mississippi River,

formed a stock company, laid out a city, sold stock and lots, and induced an enterprising young merchant to build a store and warehouse there, promising him their patronage and the handling of all their lead; they also held out inducements to other parties to settle there, and build houses and stores. The prospect for the success of the enterprise was fair, and some twenty or more buildings were erected during the summer. But below the embryo city was a slough and some swampy land, as is usually the case on Mississippi bottoms; and when fall came, and the river was low, it left all the detritus exposed to the rays of a hot sun, breeding pestilence. All the settlers fell sick. The first victim that paid with his life for his attempt to build up the new city was the young fellow who was to be the principal business man of the settlement. Other deaths followed in rapid succession and a panic ensued. All who could, fled from the place, and it was entirely abandoned; the shares became worthless, and the company was bankrupted.

One of the unfortunate settlers offered me his two-story frame store and dwelling house for $40. As there was no lumber to be had at Mineral Point, Galena, some forty miles away, was our nearest market, and every stick had to be hauled by team at great expense. The distance to Sinipee was also forty miles, hence the expense of hauling would not be more; so I took a carpenter with me, and rode out to the abandoned city to view the property, and to find out what it would cost to take down the building, haul it to Mineral Point, and put it up again.

When we finally rode down the ravine to the Mississippi River, and the bankrupted city burst upon our view, a singular sensation took hold of me. The buildings were all new, showing no sign of decay or deterioration by usage or the weather, having stood there but a little over a year. I expected momentarily to see the occupants come out to bid 362 us a welcome. There was, however, not a living being to be seen or heard; neither a dog nor a cat, nor a fox or rat—I think not even a bird gave life to the desolation. The quiet of a churchyard reigned; the houses, all painted white, seemed to loom up as monuments of departed greatness. A few hundred yards farther up, hid in the timber, stood a solitary stone building, outside the corporation limits; it had been occupied by an earlier settler.

Some two years ago [about 1887], while ascending the river from St. Louis, I saw that same stone house standing like a sentinel over the spot where fifty years ago a great rival city was to be built, to break down the monopoly of Galena. The attempt was a sad failure; but the natural development of the country has long since accomplished the result sought. The running of the Illinois Central railroad through Galena to Dubuque so severely injured the business interests of the former city that its most enterprising citizens abandoned the place and sought new fields for their activity. Chicago gained what Galena lost.

Satisfied with the building, I made a contract with the builder to have it taken down and put up at Mineral Point, and with a teamster to haul the same. For many years afterwards it was occupied as a store and postoffice, until a few years ago when it was destroyed by fire.

Mineral Point was then the most important town of Wisconsin. It was the county seat of Iowa County, and confidently expected to be the territorial capital. Its population was nearly 2,000 and steadily increasing. There were a dozen lead furnaces constantly in operation in and around the corporation, and some profitable mines were worked, giving employment to a large number of people.

Governor Dodge lived about four miles from town, and operated his furnace, together with his son Augustus C. Dodge, afterwards United States senator from Iowa. There were also the smelting establishments of C. F. Legate, Col. Pascal Bequette, Capt. John B. Terry, John F. O'Neill, and numerous others, all of whom made their headquarters at the “Point.” It was also the home of the most noted 363 lawyers and professional men of western Wisconsin. The majority of the men engaged in mining were Cornishmen, who had from early childhood been bred to that occupation in the mining districts in England.

The Bank of Mineral Point had been chartered for the avowed purpose of supplying the smelters with the necessary funds to carry on their business, and paper money was current in the mines. But after the failure of that institution, which occurred in 1841, the

miners would not take any paper money for their mineral. They insisted on receiving gold or silver, which was furnished by the Galena commission houses. On every return trip from Galena I brought out with me, stowed under the seat of my buggy, one or more thousand dollars in boxes for that purpose.

I became acquainted with S. B. Knapp, the cashier and manager of the bank, and with Porter Brace, the teller, a young gentleman of engaging manners and a pleasant companion. When these officers were arrested, charged with fraudulent practices, I was induced to become a bondsman for Brace. My confidence, however, was sadly misplaced. He fled, but was pursued, overtaken, brought back, and delivered up to the sheriff, and my bond was cancelled. I was not acquainted with the condition of the bank, and supposed the embarrassment to be only temporary; an investigation proved it to be a thoroughly rotten institution.

William H. Banks, a young lawyer of Mineral Point, who bore a high character for integrity, and who was universally respected, was appointed one of the receivers of the bank, and went to St. Louis to negotiate some of the assets belonging to the broken concern, but he never returned nor was he ever heard of again. His disappearance has remained a mystery. All inquiries and searches after him proved fruitless. Although in the minds of many, grave suspicions against his integrity arose, yet his reputation and character for integrity was so well established that most of the people accounted for his disappearance as the result of murder, or some accident which caused his death. From that time, however, the people of the mines, and particularly 364 the miners, were strenuously opposed to paper money of any kind, although among the merchants of Illinois and Michigan paper money was still circulated; but not one pound of mineral could be bought with it.

Henry and Nathan Corwith, of Galena, were the principal parties who supplied the smelters with necessary funds. When they discovered that paper money could no longer be used, they bought, in New York, a large amount of English sovereigns at probably

$4.80 to $4.83, and paid them out to the smelters at the uniform rate of $4.90. The majority of the miners being from England, knew the value of the coin, and never murmured at the rate, or refused to sell their mineral for the gold. It was safe money, quite unlike the notes of the wildcat banks which were liable at any moment to prove bits of worthless paper. For years they were gladly taken at that value; and in many a cabin you could find an old stocking filled with the precious metal which would not depreciate. The Corwiths realized a handsome profit on their investment.

The only attempt of which I have any recollection, to introduce paper money again, was made by Cadwallader C. Washburne, with the bills of the Hallowell Bank, of Maine, a few years later; but it was useless—the miners utterly refused to take them. The miners used to say they sold metal, and they wanted metal in exchange for it.

As I have already said, Mineral Point was at that time the home of the most prominent men of western Wisconsin, particularly in the profession of law. The numerous quarrels about mines, the jumping of claims, the encroachments of the diggers upon each other, caused endless litigation, presenting a fruitful field for the exercise of the talents of the lawyer. Moses M. Strong, attorney of the territory, afterwards member of the territorial council and speaker of the State assembly, had a fine residence here. Francis J. Dunn, secretary of the territory, and head of the law firm of Dunn, Jones & Crawford, was my next-door neighbor. He was generous-hearted, impulsive, very active, and a great worker. William R. Smith was probably the best-educated 365 member of the bar. He was a ripe scholar, a great historian, familiar not only with English, but also French literature, and an admirer of the works of Goethe and Schiller. He was an interesting conversationalist, liberal-minded, and pleasant. M. M. Cothren, afterwards for many years circuit judge of the Fifth judicial circuit, which office he filled with signal credit to himself and to the satisfaction of the people, was then a young lawyer, giving indications of a clear and judicial mind. Parley Eaton was also a successful advocate. Mortimer M. Jackson, a brother-in-law of C. C. Washburne, was an eloquent pleader before the court, and a highly polished gentleman. In 1841, C. C. Washburne and Cyrus Woodman settled at Mineral Point and opened a law,

land, and collection office, devoting the most of their time to land business, collections, and paying taxes, in which they succeeded in amassing ample fortunes. Captain Henry was the postmaster, and Maj. John P. Sheldon register of the United States land office.

During the presidential campaign of 1840, politics became bitter, and the parties were sharply divided into Democrats and Whigs; although Wisconsin, being only a territory, had no voice in the election. Major Sheldon was a strong Democrat, and had made himself particularly obnoxious to the Whigs by several newspaper articles. He was removed in the fall of 1840, by President Van Buren, on charges brought by his political enemies, of having permitted his friends to enter lands containing mineral, which lands were withheld from sale by the United States.

Before being permitted to enter land, the purchaser had to make oath that it did not to his knowledge contain any mineral and had to bring witnesses to that effect. Of course the temptation was great to defraud the United States, and such an oath was looked upon by many as a mere formality. I was told of instances where men were blindfolded, led across the land which was sought to be entered, and then swore that they had not seen any mineral thereon.

The Major's friends, and the people of Mineral Point generally, were greatly excited at his removal, and an indignation 366 meeting was called at the court house. Resolutions were adopted, regretting the action of the president, eulogizing the conduct of Major Sheldon, and assuring him of the entire confidence of the people in his integrity and honor. This incident intensified the bitterness of feeling, and the press of both parties took up the quarrel. *The Miners' Free Press* , published by Messrs. Welsh & Plowman at Mineral Point, was a strong Democratic paper, and 0 zealously defended the course of Major Sheldon. Gen. Charles Bracken, who lived about five or six miles south of Mineral Point, and who had been in the Black Hawk War, was an extremely bitter Whig partisan, and the reported correspondent of a Whig paper issued at Madison; he strongly denounced the Major. Henry B. Welsh, the senior editor of the *Miners' Free Press* , was a devoted personal

friend of the ex-register, and one evening while coming home from a visit to his friend he accidentally met General Bracken about a mile from town, going out to his farm. They were both on horseback, and on passing each other, the road being narrow, an altercation took place between them. Blows were exchanged, and Welsh was reported to have pulled his antagonist from his horse.

Next morning, Bracken rode into town, armed with one of the large horse-pistols that the dragoons used to carry during the Black Hawk War. Seeing Welsh in the part of town called “Shake Rag,” he advanced immediately upon him, with his pistol aimed. Welsh was unarmed, but he cried out, “Somebody hand me a pistol!” Col. Abner Nichols, the landlord of a tavern on the next corner, happened to be on the street, and hearing the appeal, quickly went into his barroom and brought out a pistol; but before he had time to deliver it to Welsh, Bracken had shot his enemy. The ball struck his collar, and glancing around it, entered the back of his neck, below the left ear. It made an ugly but not fatal wound. Welsh wore, as was at that time the custom in the mines, a collar or cravat, known as a “stock,” being a wire frame covered with silk or satin. and fastened behind by a buckle. This collar saved his life. 367 He was carried to his boarding house, he being at the time an unmarried man, and medical aid summoned; after a few weeks he was at his post again. After the shooting, Bracken coolly rode out of town, nobody attempting to hold or arrest him. His brother John, who was then deputy marshal, soon after followed him to his home, arrested him and brought him to town, and he was placed under bond and released. The excitement soon subsided, as Welsh was declared out of danger. My best recollection is that, before court met, Welsh was completely restored and the matter was allowed to drop.

That same fall occurred the first public execution that I had ever witnessed in Wisconsin. A poor fellow, named William Caffee, had, while under the influence of liquor, about two years before stabbed and killed a man at a ball given at Berry's Grove.1 He fled, but was finally caught at St. Louis, and brought back to Mineral Point, where he had his trial. He was convicted of murder, and Judge Charles Dunn sentenced him to be hanged.

When the fatal day arrived, the crowd of morbid sight-seers that poured into the village was something wonderful. They began to arrive before daylight, and from as far as forty miles; they came by wagon loads, on horseback, and on foot, in a continuous stream. Old men and young women and children and babies were there; whole settlements were for a day abandoned; many brought their provisions with them, and camped upon the hill sides. Considering the sparsity of the population, the gathering was larger than any circus nowadays can bring together. The stores and shops of all kinds did that day a very large and profitable business. The day was long remembered and talked about as “hanging day.” The eagerness and morbidity with which people will witness the suffering and agony of a poor wretch is not calculated to elevate public morals. We can be truly thankful that not only the barbarous custom of public execution,

1 *Hist. Iowa Co*., pp. 673, 674, gives the victim's name as Southwick, who was at the time managing a “house warming” for one Berry, a settler at White Oak Springs, La Fayette County.— Ed.

368 but also the death penalty itself, has been abolished in Wisconsin.

At the first session of the territorial legislature, which was held in a barn temporarily fitted up for the purpose at Belmont, about twelve miles southwest of Mineral Point, the question of a permanent location of the capital was agitated. After a long and acrimonious contest, and against the most strenuous efforts of the friends of Mineral Point, Madison, on the four lakes, a town which had just been laid out by James D. Dory, was selected as the future seat of government. It was, at the time, freely and openly charged that the vote for Madison was secured by the gift of Madison town lots; and those members of the legislature from Iowa County who voted for Madison could never thereafter recover any political standing or influence in that region.

James D. Doty was a resident of Green Bay, a lawyer of fair ability, and possessed of great suavity of manner and a pleasing address. He was very popular in the eastern part of Wisconsin, but correspondingly unpopular in the mining regions, where he was looked

upon as a selfish, scheming speculator. After Madison had been selected for the seat of government, Doty was elected one of the commissioners to build the capitol. He was an ardent Whig. The term of Gen. George W. Jones, as delegate to congress from Wisconsin, had expired. He was renominated by the Democrats, but the unfortunate Cilley-Graves duel, in which he had participated as Cilley's second, lost him the vote of the eastern counties. Thomas P. Burnet, a very popular lawyer of Grant County, ran against him in the western counties, and the result was the election of Dory as delegate to congress, and General Jones was appointed surveyor general. But the latter did not enjoy his office long, for immediately after the death of President Harrison and the inauguration of President Tyler, the territorial officers were all removed. Doty was appointed as Governor Dodge's successor.

Dodge's appearance presented a marked contrast to Doty's. The former dressed very plainly, and put on no airs. He 369 was affable to everyone, yet reserved and dignified; tall and erect in his carriage; decided and outspoken, and most scrupulously honest; he made no rash promises, but whatever he promised he fulfilled. He had the confidence of the people of all political parties, in a larger measure than any public man I have ever known in Wisconsin. After his removal by President Harrison, he was unanimously nominated by the Democratic convention for delegate to congress, and was elected over Jonathan E. Arnold, who was an eloquent and fluent speaker. With Governor Dodge and his son, Augustus C., I became intimately acquainted, owing to intermarriage of the families, and learned to respect and admire their sterling qualities.

George W. Jones's residence was on Sinsinawa Mound. If I recollect aright, his was the first entry made at the land office at Mineral Point in 1835. Sinsinawa Mound is situated in the southwestern corner of Grant County. It is one of those high elevations like Belmont, Platte Mound, and Blue Mound, that loom up like islands in the great sea of prairies of western Wisconsin, and present some of the rarest and most graceful views of all the mining country. After his removal from the office of surveyor general, Jones was appointed clerk of the court of Iowa County, and removed with his family to Mineral Point. He was my

next-door neighbor and friend until after the election and inauguration of President Polk, who reappointed him surveyor general, and located the office at Dubuque, to which place the General then removed. When Iowa was admitted as a state, he and A. C. Dodge were chosen the first senators to represent that young state. General Jones was too closely connected with the history of the Northwest to need any mention from me. He was an earnest worker for the interests of his constituents, and owing to his popularity in congress was generally successful in his efforts.

Francis J. Dunn, the brother of Chief Justice Charles Dunn, was also my neighbor for many years. He was an active, talented lawyer, and had an extensive clientage. He associated with him David W. Jones, his brother-in-law, 25 370 and later the Hon. Samuel Crawford, afterwards one of the associate justices of the supreme court, forming the firm of Dunn, Jones & Crawford. They were probably the best known and most important law firm of the mining region, and did the largest business.

Moses M. Strong devoted most of his time to politics. He was a member of the territorial council, the duties of which he discharged with eminent ability, and was speaker of the Wisconsin assembly in 1850.

Mortimer M. Jackson was also a distinguished member of the Iowa County bar—a pleasant, polished gentleman. He married a sister of the wife of C. C. Washburne, and being a Whig was appointed attorney general of the territory in place of M. M. Strong, removed.

Col. Daniel M. Parkinson, a participant in the Black Hawk War, lived on his farm, about five miles south of Mineral Point. He was a warm friend and supporter of Dodge, while his neighbor, Charles Bracken, also one of the heroes of the same war, was a political opponent of the governor. These two gentlemen became so estranged by political differences, that although nearest neighbors they would not join division fences, as was customary, but each built his fence on his own ground. They absolutely ignored each

other, never speaking together, yet never coming in collision. They are both dead now, and I have been told that prior to their death they met, shook hands, forgave each other, and died reconciled.

Edward Bouchard, a Canadian Frenchman, engaged in mining; John Messersmith, Jr., living a few miles beyond Dodgeville; and Thomas Jenkins, of Dodgeville, who was wounded in the Black Hawk War, were frequent guests at my place, rehearsing stories of their experiences.

Col. Pascal Bequette, a smelter at Diamond Grove, about six miles west of Mineral Point, a son-in-law of Governor Dodge, and one of his lieutenants in the Black Hawk uprising, was receiver of the United States land office at Mineral Point, being removed by President Tyler. Levi Sterling, a very pleasant gentleman, was appointed his successor.

At the instigation of Governor Doty, the land office was removed from Mineral Point to Muscoda, at that time a sandy, barren bottom on the Wisconsin River, about forty miles north. Dory had purchased the land and laid out a town at that place, but there were not to exceed a dozen shanties erected there when I visited it. The speculation was a failure, and even the present village of Muscoda is at least half a mile from the spot where the original settlement had been attempted. After the election of James K. Polk, the land office was re-established at Mineral Point, and Bequette reappointed its receiver. He was a gentleman of unimpeachable integrity and honor, enjoying the confidence and respect of all who knew him; for he was a modest, quiet gentleman, and an enterprising business man.

When the California gold fever broke out, he was one of the first of our Iowa County emigrants who undertook the perilous overland journey with his family. My brother Frank, who had married his sister, followed him to the land of promise. Bequette died in San Francisco.

Another prominent citizen of Mineral Point was Gen. William R. Smith, afterward attorney general under the Barstow administration. The general was probably the best educated and most learned man of this part of the country at that time. His library, aside from law books, was well supplied with the standard works of the most distinguished authors. In 1841, I think it was, he was prosecuting attorney of Iowa County when the legislature was paid in “scrip.” This scrip was a poor imitation of a bank note, printed on coarse, common paper, quite easy to counterfeit.

In the fall of 1841 I started, in company with my brother Frank, on a business visit to New York. In Chicago we were joined by a friend of mine, Theodore Baillie Blanchard, of New Orleans, who had just returned from a visit to Paris, and was traveling for pleasure before going home to work. The means of traveling had by this time so much improved, that instead of the jolting, hard-seated, two-horse wagon, we had a regular Frink & Walker daily stage line, with comfortable coaches. It was as much of an improvement 372 over the old wagon, as afterward the railroads proved to be over the stages.

To go to New York we had first to travel to Galena, forty miles. From there the stage would take us to Chicago. The coaches had three inside seats, calculated to hold three passengers each. The back seats were the most comfortable, as you had something to lean against—the others were seats of torture during a long journey. The stages did not stop at night, but drove right along. When morning came, the passengers, if they had been able to sleep at all, would wake up stiff, chilled through, and tired; and after an indifferent breakfast would have to endure another day and night of torture. My recollection is it took us three days and two nights to reach Chicago. After passing Elgin, we struck what was then called the illinois bottom, where the mud was two feet deep during rainy weather, and almost impassable during spring, when the stages frequently got mired and passengers were called upon to help pry them out of the mud. Fortunately, the present being a dry season, we had the good luck to reach Chicago without any very serious annoyance.

I cannot remember the name of the hotel at which we stopped. It was a modest brick building near the lake, but I have been unable to find its location at any of my numerous subsequent visits to Chicago. The city at that time was composed mostly of wooden buildings, and large plank sidewalks made locomotion easy and possible, notwithstanding the soft soil. The streets were full of life and bustle, and the inhabitants were predicting a great future.

George Smith, a friend and compatriot of Alexander Mitchell, of Milwaukee, was at that time the principal banker. Having exchanged with him our Western currency for Eastern funds, we engaged passage on one of the large packet steamers which were making regular trips down the lakes to Buffalo. I have forgotten the name of the steamer and its gentlemanly captain; but a more delightful trip I never took. We were favored by splendid weather. When we arrived opposite Milwaukee the captain 373 invited us into his boat to go with him and visit the city. There being no harbor, the steamer had to remain outside the bar, and we got a good drenching while crossing the line of surf. We went to the Milwaukee House, situated on Wisconsin street, near where the Northwestern Life Insurance Company's building now stands. It was a frame structure. We had a couple of hours to view the city. It struck me as a much prettier place than Chicago, and quite as large. I do not remember seeing any brick buildings, and do not think there were any at that early time; but the location was handsome, and there were manifest promises of future growth. Upon our return on board the steamer, we continued our voyage, stopping at every town on the Wisconsin side, and not once on the Michigan side, until we reached Mackinac, where the captain gave us nearly a whole day to visit the fort and neighborhood, of which privilege we availed ourselves by climbing the heights and seeing everything that was of interest. After leaving Mackinac, we steamed down Lake Huron, through Lake St. Clair, to Detroit, down the river into Lake Erie, and landed safely at Buffalo. After a short stay to view the city, which was larger than Chicago, we visited Niagara Falls, where we saw and enjoyed all the beauties of that wonderful exhibition of the power of nature. Then we took a steamer and crossed Lake Ontario to Oswego. There

we engaged passage on a canal boat, to a point where we struck the New York Central railroad.

Travel on canal boats is now a thing of the past; but in 1841 it was certainly far more pleasant and agreeable than the agony of stage-coach riding.1 The boats fitted up for passenger traffic had good accommodations and set a good table; and you were not exposed to the whims of cross, coarse, and unmannerly drivers.

1 Cf. Mrs. Baird's account of her trip on the Erie Canal, in 1836, *ante*, pp. 248–251.— Ed.

Our boat was full of passengers. At night we were hung up in hammocks, which were strung along the sides of the boat, three or four in a tier, and although they were awkward 374 to get into or out of, one could stretch himself and sleep comfortably. Then there was the novelty of the thing, which was in itself an enjoyment. The scenery was frequently splendid, and during the trip I witnessed the most sublime display of the northern lights I have ever seen before or since. After we struck the New York Central railroad we left the boat, and reached Albany in due time without any accident, although we descended to the city on an inclined plane. At Albany we took a steamer on the Hudson River, and next day we landed safely in New York. The trip from Wisconsin took us thirteen days, which was considered an unusually quick voyage.

While in New York we presented our letter of introduction to the widow of Alexander Hamilton, and mother of William S. Hamilton, our neighbor out in Wisconsin, who had given us a note to her. Mrs. Hamilton, while on a visit to her son out in Wisconsin, a few years previous, had been a guest of my mother's and we were most graciously received and spent a pleasant evening at her house. Her conversation was charming and instructive, and, notwithstanding her great age, she looked the picture of health.

Having completed our business, we started on our homeward journey by way of Philadelphia, and thence to Chambersburg, at the foot of the Alleghany mountains. Thus far we came by railroad, but now we had to take the stage-coach again. We started out

of Chambersburg at nightfall, and reached the summit in the morning, where there was a tavern called the “Summit house.”1 Here a halt was made, and we were told we could have our breakfast. The stage, happily, was not crowded; but having been jolted all night and somewhat chilled, we were anxious for a good breakfast. We had hardly sat down to the table, when the driver blew his horn, and called all aboard. He would not wait for us, but started ahead, and we were obliged to run after him. We succeeded in stopping him, and

1 Still maintained as a house of refreshment, on the “Cumberland pike,” above Uniontown, Pa.— Ed.

375 he let us aboard again. We came very near having a regular fight with the rascally driver, but we thought discretion was the better part of valor, as we were altogether in his power, and the descent from the mountain might give him a chance for revenge. It was the opinion of our fellow travelers that his action was in concert with the landlord, who got pay for his breakfast, which we could not eat, and which was good for the next arrivals.

During conversation, I found that one of our fellow travelers was Amos Kendall, ex-postmaster general under President Jackson; the other was a gentleman from New Orleans.

Our road led through a handsome country of well cultivated farms, all surrounded by fine orchards; the trees were loaded down with fruit, reminding me of the orchards of Germany and France. I believe the region was settled by what were called “Pennsylvania Dutch.” The views were fine, the road was in excellent condition, and we traveled with great speed. Towards evening we began our descent, but the driver did not check his speed. Although the scenery became more picturesque, the recklessness of our driver kept us in a fever. Many a time we were on the brink of a precipice, into which the least obstruction in the road would have thrown us. But we reached Uniontown in safety, where a steamer was ready to take us to Pittsburg, at which place we arrived at nightfall, and stopped at the Monongahela hotel.

After having seen all that was worth seeing in that city of smoke and coal dust, we took passage on a steamer down the Ohio River to Cairo, and up the Mississippi to St. Louis. Our chapter of accidents was not yet exhausted. The Ohio was at a low stage of water, and we had proceeded but a few hundred yards when we ran aground. Travelers on the Upper Mississippi River are familiar with these detentions. We got off after some hard labor; but experiencing a repetition of our accident every few minutes, it became evident that further progress by water was unadvisable. When we came in sight of Wheeling, the captain offered to refund our passage money; and hailing a lumber raft that 376 happened to be passing by, he shipped all his passengers—men, women and children, over fifty in number—on the raft, and we were landed safely at Wheeling. Quite a number were from St. Louis, homeward bound, with some of whom I was acquainted. We succeeded in hiring several coaches to take us to Cincinnati, where we expected to find the Ohio high enough for safe navigation. We traveled day and night, and arrived at Cincinnati without any serious accident, except that one of our coaches broke down one night, and we had to walk about a mile and a half to the next village, where the injury was repaired. As we had anticipated, we found no difficulty in proceeding by steamer from Cincinnati. We glided down to Cairo, and then steamed up the Mississippi to St. Louis. After visiting there among friends for a few days, we took a Galena steamer, arrived at the mines in due time, and getting on the stage reached home after an absence of over two months.

After having traveled many hundreds of miles by stage, we came very near having the most serious accident within about half a mile from Mineral Point. It was late in the evening and very dark. Our stage, going at a rapid rate, struck a stump in O'Neill's grove and upset. There were nine persons inside, and two up with the driver, making eleven passengers. Nobody was seriously hurt. A young lady passenger fainted, but was soon returned to consciousness, and brought safely home.

In January of the next winter, when the ground was covered with snow to an average depth of from two to three feet, and the thermometer was down to 40 below, I started in a

sleigh with H. S. Dodge, who was running the governor's furnace near Dodgeville, on an overland trip to Milwaukee. It was a long and tedious journey. The first day we drove fifty-three miles to Madison, then quite a small village, where the legislature was in session. I had chance to see the shell of the $140,000 capital building. The next day we reached Janesville, on Rock River, which was a growing and enterprising village. The next 377 night we passed at Major Meecham's, an old friend of Governor Dodge. The fifth day we reached Milwaukee, after having passed Prairieville (now Waukesha), and tasted the sweet comforts of traveling over the corduroy roads through the so-called “Milwaukee woods.”

The principal object of our trip was to establish business relations at Milwaukee, by which we might be enabled to send the products of the lead mines to Milwaukee, thence to be shipped to the eastern markets by way of the lakes, and so create a competing port with Galena. Our arrangements were made with Messrs. Joe and Linsey Ward, gentlemen of means and enterprise, to whom the lead was consigned. But the undertaking did not prove a financial success, and was not kept up long. The transportation of the lead by “prairie schooners,” as the ox teams were called, while in the lead mines they went by the name of “sucker teams,” was too expensive.1

1 See Libby's “Significance of the Lead and Shot Trade in Early Wisconsin,” *Wis. Hist. Colls*., xiii, pp. 293–334.— Ed.

During this visit to Milwaukee, I became acquainted with most of the prominent business men of that city; particularly with Josiah A. Noonan, with whom I continued on intimate terms until his death. Mr. Noonan was a man of remarkable energy, and acquainted with the public and private history of every prominent man of Wisconsin He was a true and honest friend of his friends, but a good hater of his enemies. Linsey Ward was a Democrat, but Joe Ward was a pronounced Whig and a friend of Governor Doty; and although he shortly afterward married Mrs. Kingberry, a daughter of Governor Dodge, he remained loyal to his friend, and was one of his trusted counsellors, so that in the mines

he was known as “Doty's left bower.” I also got acquainted with Solomon Juneau, Fred Warner, Daniel Wells, Jr., Hans Crocker, and many prominent men who afterward gained great distinction in business and politics.

The summer following, I began the erection of a brick store and dwelling house at Mineral Point, which was, I think, the first solid brick building put up there. Most of 378 the buildings were stone, that material being plenty and comparatively cheap; although a goodly number of frame buildings had been erected, the difficulty of getting a supply of lumber, and the high prices charged, induced the people to use the stone which the neighboring hills provided. All the lumber used in my building was bought in Galena of M. M. Maughs, and had to be transported by teams to Mineral Point. I mention this circumstance, only because, during the spring of 1854, while I was traveling down the Lemonweir valley, I found my old acquaintance, Mr. Maughs, established at a place called Maughstown — now Mauston — where he had started a village and erected a saw mill.1 Such unexpected meetings of old acquaintances were incidents of pioneer life.

1 See *Wis. Hist. Colls*., viii, pp. 385, 386; also *History of Northern Wisconsin* (Chicago: Western Historical Co., 1881), pp. 368, 369.— Ed.

The term of Governor Dodge as delegate to congress having expired, he was unanimously renominated by the Democratic convention at Madison, and Gen. I. W. Hickox was nominated by the Whigs. The canvass was exciting and bitter, and there were more speeches made by the respective friends of the candidates than during any previous campaign. But Dodge was re-elected, many of his Whig friends voting for him. None of the candidates made speeches, as it was not in those days considered dignified on their part to go about the country addressing meetings in their own behalf, and requesting votes; that was thought to be the duty and business of friends who desired their election.

During all this time, Governor Dory and the legislature were in constant hostility. One of the governor's vagaries had to be settled by a joint resolution. The governor hart a

fondness for spelling the name of the territory as “Wiskonsan.” The legislature, in order to avoid future embarrassments and misunderstandings, found itself obliged to declare by a joint resolution that the spelling used in the organic act should be maintained.

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During Doty's incumbency occurred the killing of Charles C. P. Arndt in the council chamber at Madison, by James R. Vineyard, of Grant County. I had known Vineyard, and when he was brought to Mineral Point as a prisoner, I, with a large number of his friends, visited him and procured for him the required bail. Vineyard claimed that he acted in self-defense, and his friends and neighbors all declared him to be a peaceable, kind-hearted man. To me he expressed his sorrow for his rashness, but insisted on his right of self-defense. On his subsequent trial he was acquitted. John H. Rountree, a highly respected citizen of Grant County, political opponent of Vineyard, but for upwards of fifteen years a neighbor and friend of the prisoner, and an eyewitness of the killing, gave testimony in common with other members of the council who were present, which convinced the jury that the shooting was really done in self-defense.1

1 Cf. *ante*, pp. 255, 256; numerous reports of this affair in previous volumes of the *Collections*; and article by E. W. Keyes in Milwaukee *Sentinel* for Aug. 27, 1899.

New discoveries of lead mines were constantly made throughout the mining regions, principally at Blue River and Franklin, where my brother, Charles G. Rodolf, and Henry M. Billings, worked valuable leads. The country was settling rapidly with miners, principally Cornishmen, who were experienced workers in lead mines.2

2 See Louis Albert Copeland's “The Cornish in Southwest Wisconsin,” in *Wis. Hist. Colls*., xiv, pp. 301–334.— Ed.

The social relations of the people of Mineral Point were about the same as prevailed in those early days in all new settlements. Although the population was mixed, not much race prejudice was perceptible, except that the Cornish people, who formed the majority of

the foreign population, adhered more strictly to some of their peculiar customs. Of course intellectual and financial differences will always and everywhere bring about separate social groupings. Mineral Point could not be expected to be altogether free from this universal law; but the young people had their enjoyments, their parties and their balls, to which every 380 one whose conduct was correct was invited, and the neighbors within a radius of twenty miles or more would gladly accept invitations and hardly ever fail to respond.

There were public and private schools. There was a creditable Presbyterian church building, and a respectable congregation. The Methodists had two churches—one a Methodist Episcopal, and the other a Primitive Methodist. Almost all the Cornishmen were Methodists. The Episcopalians purchased the old Mineral Point Bank building, and converted it into a church, and the Roman Catholics also built a tasteful edifice. My mother and sisters having for many years been deprived of the benefit of attending church, were anxiously seeking for a congregation teaching the creed in which they were educated, but in vain. Our family having been, ever since the sixteenth century, members of the Swiss Reformed denomination, concluded that the Episcopal church more nearly represented their religious views than any other of the various sects, hence they joined the Episcopalian congregation, which, though small in number, was deemed eminently respectable. As for myself and my brothers, the almost endless division of beliefs and creeds by which for a time we were assailed by their votaries, bewildered us, and I might almost say disgusted us; so that none of us, as far as I can recollect, joined any particular church, but adhered to the belief of our fathers, and were satisfied to live honorable, upright lives.

An accession to our social circle was made by the arrival of two young ladies, whom my brother-in-law, John Milton, brought out with him from Boston, about this time. One was Miss Sweet, his niece, who was afterward married to Samuel Crawford, associate justice of the supreme court, now the wife of J. M. Smith, a well-known lawyer of Mineral Point. The other was Miss Washburne, a sister of C. C. Washburne, who became the wife of

Charles L. Stephenson, then a merchant of Mineral Point, and receiver of the United States land office under President Fillmore's administration.

Dr. John H. Vivian, of England, a highly-educated and 381 agreeable gentleman, also made his home at Mineral Point. Dr. Vivian was for years an active and valuable member of the State Board of Charities and Reform; he is a very influential citizen of Iowa County, and occupies the house and store which I built in 1842, having purchased my drug business and property at the time of my removal to La Crosse in 1853.

The election of President James K. Polk was celebrated at Mineral Point by a great procession, speeches, and festivities. George W. Jones marshalled the whole proceedings. Soon after the inauguration of the president, Jones was reappointed surveyor general, and left Mineral Point for Dubuque, where the office was located.

William Pitt Lynde, of Milwaukee, was now appointed attorney general; Gov. Nathaniel P. Tallmadge was removed, and General Dodge restored to the governorship of the territory. He received a great ovation at the hands of the people of the mining country. He was escorted from his residence, about four miles north of Mineral Point, by the Mineral Point Dragoons, under the command of Capt. J. F. O'Neil, to the court house, where he was welcomed, and briefly responded. A dinner was served at the Mansion House, toasts were offered and responded to, and the festivity closed by a grand ball in the evening. The governor always enjoyed the warm friendship and esteem of his neighbors, Whigs as well as Democrats.

Timothy Burns, then living in the southern part of Iowa County—now Lafayette County—was elected sheriff, and moved with his family to Mineral Point, and as sheriff occupied the courthouse right across the street from my house, and was my near neighbor as long as he lived at Mineral Point. He was an efficient and popular officer, and after his term of office had expired, represented Iowa County in the legislature, until the state government was formed. He was virtually the founder of La Crosse, where he died in the fall of 1853,

in the full vigor of his manhood, with great political prospects before him. He was a great reader, shrewd politician, and essentially what is called a self-made man.

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After many fruitless attempts to bring the mineral lands into market, and to permit their purchase, F. J. Dunn, after a personal visit to Washington, finally succeeded in convincing the government that the best interests of the country demanded that the settlers should be permitted to enter the lands; that by so doing the constant quarrels, fights, and shootings would be put at an end. Many families had been living on their claims from ten to twenty years, built houses, cultivated farms, and had no titles to their homes. The lands were now offered at public sale at the land office at Mineral Point, and in order to protect themselves against speculators and land sharks, the settlers formed an association and elected committees before whom every claimant was required to make proof of settlement and right to the land claimed. Men were also chosen to bid in all the lands in certain neighborhoods, for the purpose of afterwards conveying the same to the proper party. The sale took place, and no disturbance occurred. A few speculators appeared, but when they understood how matters were arranged, they wisely abstained from bidding against any settler, except in one solitary instance, in which a stranger made a bid; but he was immediately seized, lifted over the heads of the bystanders, put out into the street, and told not to show his head again. He left town immediately. After the sale, little was heard about jumping claims, or fighting for diggings. The mining country became as quiet and orderly as any other community, not counting an occasional shooting or stabbing affray, resulting from a drunken row, or a fight for a mine or prospect.

I remember but two cases of premeditated murder for money, during my residence in the mines. One was the killing of an old German shoemaker, who lived alone in a shanty in the outskirts of the village, and was supposed to have saved a large sum of money. One morning he was found lying murdered on the floor of his room. The other victim was an old Cornish miner, named Phil Cox, also a bachelor, living alone in a well-settled part of the town. Cox was a queer character, but a harmless man, and reported 383 as being

possessed of quite a large amount of money hidden away in his house. While sitting in front of his fire-place, he was struck from behind with an ax. The body fell into the fire, which partly consumed it. Neither of these murderers was ever discovered or brought to punishment.

Some funny cases were occasionally brought up before the justices of the peace, who were not always the proper persons to administer the law. One curious decision, however, created a good deal of merriment at the time. A farmer living a few miles out of town discovered one morning that somebody had been robbing his oat stacks during the night, hauling the grain off in a wagon. He traced the wagon into town, to the house of the thief, and immediately lodged a complaint with the justice of the peace, who had the man arrested. The justice was an honest old miner, named, I think, Nikey Uren, who as soon as the culprit appeared before him, and without giving him time to plead or make any explanation, said to him: “Carter (that was the name of the accused), you stole the oats, and my judgment is that you immediately return the oats to the place whence you took them, and pay a fine of $5.” The thief uttered no protest, but paid his fine and immediately returned the oats. The thief was ever afterwards known as “Sheaf Oats Carter,” and shortly after left the country. The justice saved him lawyer's fees and trouble, and saved great costs to the county, by this summary, though informal, proceeding, which might in many cases be profitably imitated.

During all this time Mineral Point, though it had lost the cherished location as state capital, was steadily growing in population and importance. Milwaukee, on the other hand, was advancing with marvelous rapidity, foreshadowing its future greatness. It had already become the commercial metropolis of Wisconsin, and was rapidly accumulating wealth. Eastern people flocked to it, and Eastern capital was freely invested, while the prosperity of the mining country, which depended greatly on its luck in striking new leads, was spasmodic.

Messrs. C. C. Washburne and Cyrus Woodman were building up an important and profitable business, and became known as gentlemen of great business capacity and unimpeachable integrity. Washburne built himself a comfortable, elegant home, and brought his bride to the city. She was a sister-in-law of Mortimer M. Jackson, and a lady of accomplishments and amiable disposition. Washburne was a strongly-pronounced Whig, while Woodman was a moderate Democrat, voting in local elections for whom he thought the best-fitted candidate. He never offered himself as a candidate for any office, while Washburne was once defeated for justice of the peace by an old one-eyed miner named Eben Polk. Washburne, though highly esteemed, was not personally popular with the miners and common people. Woodman was a lover of the fine arts and literature, and he and I had many friendly discussions over the respective merits of the works of authors of various nationalities, which he regretted being unable to enjoy in their original language, having to be satisfied with translations. We together read the voyage and discovery of the Mississippi by Father Marquette, in French, and became quite intimate with that portion of our history.

The question of petitioning congress to admit Wisconsin to statehood was now strongly advocated; a constitutional convention was called, a constitution framed, submitted to a vote of the people, and voted down. The country for some years past had been flooded with a paper currency called “shinplasters,” “wild cats,” and “yellow dogs,” which were based on “cheek,” and had no capital to back them. They were liable at any moment to be worthless. You might go to sleep with $1000 in your possession, and wake up in the morning and find your bank bills worthless. Although the miners would not touch a dollar of this currency, yet it was the circulating medium in every other line of business. The people of western Wisconsin insisted on serting into the constitution an article not only prohibiting in-state banks from issuing paper money, but prohibiting and excluding the circulation of any paper money whatever in 385 the state, recognizing only gold and silver as legal tender. The people on the lake shore and in all eastern counties, being mostly trading communities, were largely in favor of a paper currency. The result was the rejection of the

state constitution, and the calling of another convention which recognized banks and paper money. That constitution was adopted, and in 1848 Wisconsin became a sovereign state.

I must refer to an occurrence previous to these events, which might have resulted in serious complications to the parties concerned. As I have already stated, the law firm of Dunn, Jones & Crawford were doing a large business for the mining community. Among their patrons was Dennis Murphy, of Lafayette County, who possessed valuable lead interests, and had for years been a client of the firm. He claimed that his lawyers were engaged by him by the year. A misunderstanding occurred between them, and one day while Samuel Crawford was in the village, Murphy assaulted him with a cowhide, claiming the firm had betrayed his interests. Crawford was unarmed, and had to retreat.

The report of the fracas reached Mineral Point before Crawford returned, but the next day, when he went to his law office, Francis J. Dunn forbade him to enter, saying that no man who had been assaulted as Crawford had been without taking revenge on his assailants could ever associate with him. There was in the office at that time a young law student named John Delany, a friend of Crawford, who offered to take the latter to Benton, Lafayette County, and give him a chance to wipe out this indignity. Next morning they started early on their errand, and reached Murphy's place near sundown. Crawford had a loaded gun with him in his buggy. As they entered the village, Murphy stood in the door of his home. As soon as he discovered the buggy approaching, he turned to enter the house. Delany said, “Now is your time—quick!” Crawford seized the gun, discharged it into his retreating foe, and drove immediately out of the village. Murphy was hit in the thigh, was carried into the house, and medical aid quickly summoned. Crawford drove on to Galena, where he had a 26 386 brother living, and after consulting with him went to Belmont, where Chief Justice Charles Dunn lived, and surrendered himself. Next day Judge Dunn and Crawford came to Mineral Point. Crawford gave the bonds required, and was released from custody. I was one of his bondsmen.

The affair created great excitement. Luckily the wound was not fatal, and in due course of time Murphy recovered, but retained a slight lameness during the remaining years of his life, and the matter was finally satisfactorily adjusted. It was feared for a time that this affair might injuriously affect Crawford's political prospects; but after we had succeeded in nominating him for associate judge of the state supreme court, in 1853, his talents and acknowledged ability as a jurist, and a true understanding of the Murphy case, carried him safely through the canvass. Dunn was by birth a southerner—a Kentucky gentleman—where it was considered a disgrace not to resent a personal assault. Crawford could only regain his standing by complying with the exaction of his partner.

In the summer of 1845 I was visited by two Swiss gentlemen, Messrs. Fridolin Streiff and Nicholas Duerst.1 They were sent out by the government of the canton of Glarus, in Switzerland, for the purpose of selecting a tract of land whereon to settle a colony of emigrants from that canton. They called on me for advice. I prevailed on my brother Frederick, who still lived on the farm on which we had settled in 1834, to place his horses at the disposal of these gentlemen and carry them wherever they wished to go. I also engaged a competent surveyor, Arnzi Comfort, to accompany them in search of a proper tract of land, and volunteered to accompany the party.

1 See John Luchsinger's “The Planting of the Swiss Colony at New Glarus, Wis.,” in *Wis. Hist. Colls*., xii, pp. 335–382; also, Mathias Duerst's “Diary,” *ante*, pp. 294–337.— Ed.

We first started north to examine the vacant government lands in and along the bluffs on the Wisconsin River, and camped in a tent over night. Next day we climbed a high bluff, from which we had a splendid view along and across 387 the Wisconsin River into Sauk County, where we knew, from plats we had taken at the land office at Mineral Point, that large bodies of government land were yet to be had. We concluded to cross the Wisconsin and examine the character of the land. We descended from the mountain, and traveled up stream to Helena, where C. C. Washburne was operating a shot tower. There we were ferried across the river, and traveled westward to the promised land that looked so

tempting when we saw it from a distance. There was plenty of it, and the soil was very rich; but it was low ground, and we found no springs of fresh water, and only scattering timber, so concluded that it did not suit our purpose. We wanted land, water, and timber; for we were fearful that our settlers would fall victims to fever and ague, and reluctantly wound our way back, crossed the river, and returned to Mineral Point.

There we procured new plats, intending to visit the southern section of Iowa and adjoining counties. Starting out from the east fork of the Peckatonica River to Argyle, we crossed over into Green County, and toward sundown reached a valley which appeared to unite all the essential features that we needed to make a successful settlement. There were some squatters on the land, whom I knew. One was Stephen Armstrong and his wife, who had been our neighbors when we first settled on our farm in 1834. The other was a Canadian Frenchman whose name I cannot recall; but whose wife, Boleta, had for some years been a domestic in my mother's family. We spent the night there, and next morning examined the land. Comfort traced the lines. We wanted about 1200 acres, and there were that many acres and more, of splendid land, with water in abundance, and fine timber. We bought the claims of Armstrong and Boleta's husband, and, having arranged everything satisfactorily, returned to Mineral Point and secured the land at the land office. The money was sent by the authorities of the canton of Glarus, and Duerst soon after returned home to Switzerland. Streiff, however, remained to superintend the laying out of the village, and 388 to direct and guide the expected settlers, who in due time made their appearance. Most of them came by way of St. Louis and Galena, and stopped at my house at Mineral Point for direction and advice.

Streiff, I believe, is alive yet (1889), though I do not remember having seen him since that time. He was a gentleman of good sense, kind heart, just, a strong constitution, an indefatigable worker, and, I am told, enjoys, very justly too, the esteem and confidence of his fellow-townsmen. I have never been to New Glarus. Since my removal to La Crosse, which for the last thirty-six years has been my home, my business engagements and duties in other directions have prevented me from ever visiting the colony in whose

inception and birth I assisted. But from all reports, the colony is prosperous—industry and thrift prevail. The people have preserved the honesty, integrity, activity, and love of liberty which have been the distinguishing traits of the Swiss nation for the last six hundred years.

At the outbreak of the Mexican War, a company of volunteers was organized, of which J. Clowney was elected captain and I first lieutenant. We offered our services to Governor Dodge. He accepted our offer, and told us to be ready to march to Prairie du Chien and occupy Fort Crawford, as the United States troops stationed there were already or would soon be ordered to the front. In a few days, however, the governor informed us that Wyram Knowlton, afterward judge of the sixth judicial district of the State, who was a resident of Prairie du Chien, had organized company composed of citizens of Crawford County, and had asked the privilege of being permitted to protect their own homes and to occupy the fort. He asked us to recall our application, promising us the first chance to go to Mexico should any farther calls for troops be made on Wisconsin by the secretary of war, to which we cheerfully assented. Shortly afterward, Captain Clowney removing from Mineral Point, resigned, and I was elected captain. We anxiously waited for orders from the government; but they 389 never came, for the war terminated soon after, by the capture of the City of Mexico.

The foregoing reminiscences embrace the principal events within my personal knowledge, occurring during the minority of our growing and noble State of Wisconsin. Most of the old pioneers whose brains, energy and courage shaped its destiny and directed its course are gone to their last homes, but their deeds will endure. With the inauguration of statehood, a new era commenced. The upward career of Wisconsin has surpassed the expectations of its most sanguine friends.